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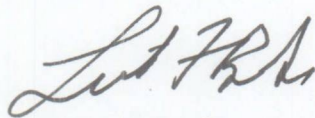
CNA 2000 Annual Conference Quicklook Report

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A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'LFB', is centered above the printed name.

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Memorandum for the new leadership of the Department of Defense

Subject: Key defense issues

As you assume office, you will face a daunting list of issues on budgets, people, and policy. To assist you in dealing with some of these issues, CNA convened a conference of over 200 national security professionals in late November 2000. Through a series of panels and discussions, conference participants considered a number of specific issues, including the role of the military, the perceptions of a personnel and morale crisis, the pros and cons of a sea-based component of national missile defense, how to strike the right balance between fostering intellectual competition among the services and ensuring they can work together in real-world operations, the degree to which "transformation" driven by technology should govern our thinking, and the appropriate priorities for the Defense Department during the coming year. This memorandum summarizes the insights we gained.

Overarching insights

Although our conference deliberations focused on six specific issues, we were able to draw a number of general conclusions. The following were among the most important:

- **Executive-Congressional relations have become excessively hostile and counter-productive.** Re-establishing trust and confidence is of utmost importance. In doing so, it is essential to avoid giving specific weapons systems or defense programs a party label.
- **The military must not become an interest group.** What is good for America is, by definition, good for the Armed Forces. The Armed Forces need to be non-partisan representatives of American society, firmly connected with the American people. You should insist on this attitude.
- **The State Department must be bolstered if the Defense Department is to succeed.** The modern world requires the closest coordination between foreign and defense policy, both in formulation and execution. You should do all you can to strengthen that coordination and to foster a strong State Department as a means to prevent conflict. In particular:
 - The State Department has been systematically underfunded. You should support the necessary increases and, to the extent appropriate, necessary reform in internal State Department procedures.
 - Although the military services function well together, integration with other agencies is not smooth. You should ensure that improvements in interagency coordination match past improvements in jointness. In this regard, you should pay particular attention to the important relationship between the Unified Commanders and the State Department.

- **The Defense Department is not keeping abreast of the latest technology, especially information technology.** Although our conference had no sessions on either acquisition or technology, speakers frequently noted the importance of finding better ways for the military to keep abreast of modern technology. You should work to shorten the acquisition cycle, especially with regard to information technology.
- **The gap between the public and the Department of Defense is growing.** You must help the public understand that our military provides the global environment that makes the country secure and prosperous. This will be difficult because of the pervasive disinterest in military issues among the public (and many of their Congressional representatives) and because the public does not see a major threat facing the United States.
 - You face a particular challenge in explaining to the public and the Congress the continued importance of NATO, especially as the NATO allies continue to display their willingness for independent operations and policy.
- **Change and reform will come only if the top DOD leadership directs them.** You should do so. There are many ideas for improving the operations of the Defense Department. Defense leadership will be crucial in implementing these ideas.

The role of the military: striking the proper balance

The most fundamental issue facing any President or Secretary of Defense is deciding on the purposes for which the military will be used. Our deliberations suggested the following considerations bear on this fundamental issue:

- **The choice between warfighting and other missions is a false one.** The military exists to carry out the will of the nation. U.S. military forces must prepare both for combat and for other operations. What is crucial is to ensure adequate training, including a deep understanding of the realities of international political considerations.
- **A fixation on readiness for two nearly simultaneous major regional contingencies risks creating a national military strategy that is semi-independent of the foreign policy of the United States.** Some military leaders resisted becoming involved in Yugoslavia because it was not the war they had prepared for. The two-major-theater-war scenario must not become so institutionalized that it precludes U.S. response to other contingencies.
- **Operation Desert Storm should not be seen as the only—or even the primary—model for future conflict.** Desert Storm was characterized by slow buildup, favorable weather, few civilians, and precision strike.

- Kosovo, with its bad weather, extensive civilian presence intermingled with enemy forces, and the inability of the United States to dominate from a distance, showed the shortcomings of this model. You should insist that the military recognize the lessons from Kosovo about fighting at both high and low ends of conflict.
- **Overemphasis on a Desert Storm-like full-spectrum dominance model of warfare risks decoupling us from our NATO allies.** Europeans have moved toward smaller forces, greater risk taking, more forces on the ground, and accepting the time delays that result from political pressures. Americans emphasize decisive force, action at a distance, mass, and maneuver.
 - These two divergent views must be pulled together for U.S. and allied militaries to work together effectively in the future. The United States has been aggressive on technical interoperability with NATO, but not on conceptual, doctrinal interoperability.
- **The military should augment its traditional emphasis on fighting and winning with a new emphasis on preventing conflict while there is still a peace to keep.** Although conflict prevention is not a traditional military role, the military can play a significant role.
 - In seeking to prevent mass violence, the military should embrace an expanded concept of warning, integrated civil-military planning developed in advance, flexible options for operations, and an approach that emphasizes strengthening internal leaders, rather than external intervention.
- **You should continue to regard engagement (or shaping the environment) as an important military mission.** Although difficult to plan and measure, shaping can help turn countries away from conflict, discourage the procurement of offensive forces, improve coalition interoperability, and help professionalize foreign militaries.
 - Compared to other elements of the strategy (responding to crises and preparing for the future), shaping may be underfunded.
- **Homeland defense is emerging as an exceptionally important mission.** There is strong consensus in the United States that we ought to do more in this area, but no consensus on what to do. The public will have little tolerance if the government is unable to prevent a major catastrophe.
 - National missile defense is part of the problem, but only part. You should encourage more clarity in what else is meant by homeland defense (drug interdiction? illegal immigration? terrorist attack?).
 - A key task is to devise procedures so the military can assist in a homeland crisis, while remaining subordinate to the civil authority.

Dealing with the perceived leadership and morale crisis

In the long run, your success depends on the quality of the men and women in the military. Given this, the widespread and well-documented retention and morale problems among junior officers should be of great concern to you. Our deliberations suggested the following:

- **The retention and morale problem among military officers is primarily, but not exclusively, a problem of leadership.** Other contributing factors may include:
 - The mismatch of resources and tasking of recent years with its consequent high operational tempo.
 - Pay insufficiencies in a booming economy.
 - Generational differences in an era where younger workers view frequent job changes as the preferred career pattern.
 - A loss in professionalism in the military, especially among the combat arms.
- **The problem is not new;** its magnitude was masked during the dramatic personnel draw-down following the end of the Cold War.
- **Solving the problem will require you to consider changes in personnel practices, including using different approaches for different parts of the force.**
 - Pay increases and improvements in retirement and medical provisions help, but will not in themselves solve the problem.
 - Although Congress will support Defense Department efforts to reform the current personnel system, the Hill assumes that the problem is one of leadership and that “the solution to a leadership problem is leadership.”
 - Leadership at all levels is important; junior officers are retained or not retained largely due to the efforts of their immediate seniors.
- **You should also continue the emphasis on quality of life for military men and women and their families.** Under the all-volunteer force, readiness includes mental readiness, and mental readiness depends in part on how the nation cares for military families.
- **Although the problems are less prominent, the civilian workforce is aging and needs your attention.** Problems in attracting civilian talent are exacerbated by a serious decline in the ethic of public service.
 - One useful step would be to make it easier for business executives to serve within the Defense Department for brief periods.

A sea-based component of national missile defense (NMD)

It is official U.S. policy to deploy national missile defense. Because others have focused on the broad policy and arms control issues, our conference examined the narrower issue of whether to have a sea-based component of such a defense. Although we reached no conclusion, the following insights may help you formulate a policy:

- **Many issues are not unique to sea-based systems.** The benefits of NMD in discouraging ballistic missile proliferation and guarding against ballistic missile attack apply to any robust system.
 - Interceptor technology, arms control, political, and funding issues will apply equally to any system of national missile defense. With respect to arms control, only the prospects of a serious U.S. NMD program can lead the Russians to accept a greatly modified ABM Treaty.
- **But sea-based systems may offer some unique benefits.** The ideal national missile defense would be global, layered, and evolutionary. Sea-based systems may offer a crucial bridge to this vision.
 - With the type of priority given to the Polaris missile and the SSBN, a robust capability could be deployed earlier than critics assume. The existing Navy theater missile defense program could also serve as the basis for a near-term, interim national missile defense that can be obtained in no other way.
- **The value of a sea-based system depends on the overall missile defense architecture.** Sea-based systems are especially valuable for boost or ascent phase intercepts, but geography will not always allow such intercepts.
 - The urgency of deployment is also relevant. Full-fledged sea-based NMD will almost certainly lag several years behind a land-based system; an interim sea-based system (using land-based radars) might be deployed earlier, but there is disagreement as to its value.
- **There are limitations to a sea-based missile defense system and significant challenges to its rapid development.**
 - A sea-based system could not defend against all possible launch sites. The requirement to position ships near potential adversaries' launch sites could make them vulnerable.
 - Neither the current Navy interceptor nor the current Aegis (SPY-1) radar are likely to be adequate for defense against ICBMs. Command-and-control requirements, especially for boost-phase intercepts, are daunting.
- **An important cost of sea-based national missile defense is diverting Navy ships (already heavily committed to forward deployments) from other roles.** Because the fleet is stretched thin today, sea-based NMD will require either more ships

or acceptance of greater risks. Adding NMD missions has other costs as well; the Navy has multimission ships, but there is a limit on the number of simultaneous missions.

- **If sea-based missile defenses are to be deployed, there are a number of policy choices that will have significant operational implications for the Navy:**
 - What will be defended (all 50 states? only some of them? forward-based radars? allies?) and against what specific threat?
 - The specific sea-based role (NMD ships as extended sensors, as shooters, or as both).
 - Whether the United States will keep the ships forward deployed on patrol on a near-continuous basis or will assume sufficient warning time to keep the ships in their normal forward-deployed areas.
 - Whether (and how many) additional ships will be constructed and whether they will be single or multimission vessels.
- **Because of the many unresolved issues, you should conduct a comprehensive study of all options for defending America against ballistic missiles, unconstrained by the limits of the ABM Treaty.**

Integrating service doctrines in an expeditionary age

One of the most enduring national defense challenges is how to strike a balance between fostering intellectual competition among the services while also promoting cooperation. Intellectual competition leads to innovation, but the forces and doctrine that result from that competition need to be compatible with real-world operations. Four-star officers from each of the military services helped us wrestle with how to strike this balance. Among their insights were the following:

- **The global strategic environment has changed significantly.** Today, the U.S. military operates within “the era of the limited objective.” Future military operations are likely to occur on a much smaller scale and to develop much more rapidly.
 - The role of the U.S. military in these nontraditional operations has yet to be clearly defined. Bringing greater clarity to this role should be a priority for the new administration.
- **Each service is engaged in some form of transformation to deal with this new environment.** Each has developed a service vision to guide its transformation.
 - All services recognize that their visions must be integrated and that future military operations will almost entirely be conducted jointly.

- **But we are more joint in rhetoric than in practice.** A disconnect exists between joint and individual service doctrines, resulting in inconsistencies at the tactical level where doctrine is applied to real-world operations.
 - Symptoms include lack of interoperability, lack of common equipment procurement, and difficulty in conducting joint operations. Existing processes have had limited success at translating the individual service visions into a cohesive reality.
 - This may be a problem with the service visions themselves; they are frequently used as a defensive measure to define a service's capabilities relative to others in a competition for resources.
- **As the services adapt to the new environment, they will rely heavily on the creation and subsequent introduction of new advanced systems** to bridge the gap between their old and new approaches. Technology will also facilitate greater service integration.
 - Technology will allow common procurement programs, better situational awareness, improved command-and-control capabilities, and a greater common understanding of the joint battle space. You should support and foster this trend.

Technology and transformation

One of the major issues you will face is dealing with the transformation in operations associated with the so-called Revolution in Military Affairs. The following insights may assist you in this area.

- **The international security environment has changed, but the apparatus by which the United States provides for its security has changed little, if at all.** Our participants varied on the extent of reform that is required, but all saw a need for change, and some called for drastic reform.
- **There is a U.S. security strategy–military capabilities mismatch.** Technology may help resolve this mismatch, but it also requires more effort in thinking through where and why the United States will apply military power.
 - There is a strong perception within the military that the U.S. defense establishment in general and the individual services in particular don't have the resources to provide the military capabilities the nation needs.
 - There are unlikely to be enough additional resources to meet all identified needs; thus, the nation needs to change the way it allocates the defense resources it has.
- **The Defense Department in general and the service requirements and acquisition processes in particular are not joint enough.**

- There are several reasons. Each service continues to retain its own war-fighting budget authority. There are overlapping and duplicated functions performed across all of the services. Finally, the services are naturally resistant to change.
- This suggests a need for strong military and political leadership to facilitate better service integration.
- **There is a growing gap between the pace of technological advancement in the commercial sector and the pace of transformation in the military services,** caused in part by failure to exploit information technology.

Priorities for the new administration

Our discussions suggested many steps you could or should take. Because you cannot do everything, you will need to establish three types of priorities: what to turn to first (i.e., what's most urgent), where to place your greatest intellectual effort (what's most difficult), and where to direct funding (what's most important). Our deliberations suggested the following:

- **The most important issue is almost certainly the budget,** especially given the near-universal assumption of our participants that significant increases in resources are unlikely and the equally universal recognition that current budgets will not support the programmed force without some change.
 - An immediate and difficult problem will be harmonizing the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) with the preparation of the budget and the many other ongoing DOD processes. The time requirements of these various processes make integration difficult.
 - You should strive to make the QDR both strategy and budget driven; ignoring either aspect is unwise. You should also ensure that the QDR is genuinely joint rather than a competition among services.
- **Almost equally important will be managing our overseas defense relationships.** While Japan and Asia are important, the first focus should be on Europe since our military relationship is so much more closely tied with our industrial relationship in Europe than elsewhere.
 - You can assume that the U.S. ability to manage alliances will be tested early in the administration, although we cannot tell whether that test will come in the Middle East, the Balkans, the Korean peninsula, or with European reaction to national missile defense.
 - In managing alliance relationships, it is important to recall that pulling forces out sends a clear signal, just as sending troops in does. Our signal should be that we are both committed *and* flexible.

- Despite the new administration's desire to be more cautious about where we intervene, public opinion may demand military intervention in humanitarian operations. It will be important to maintain and improve our low-end capacity and to assist other countries in developing this capacity.
- **The most urgent issue to face the new administration, however, may be homeland defense against asymmetric threats.** For example, the information revolution and our civil structure's dependence on information systems have made us vulnerable to cyber-attack.
 - We may need to restructure the government to better deal with these new homeland defense challenges. You should lead the National Security Council in developing the capacity to coordinate the homeland defense effort.
 - This effort should be part of an integrated approach to keeping America secure in a proliferated world. Such an effort must go beyond homeland defense to include, *inter alia*, dealing with North Korea, Russian nuclear materiel and weaponry, terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, tactical missile defense, diplomacy, and the role of treaties.
- Although they need not be dealt with immediately, **perhaps the most difficult issues you face have to do with nuclear weapons and arms control, especially given the impending new reality of national missile defense.** Few areas are as ripe for fresh thinking as nuclear policy, and few are being so widely neglected.
- **You will also need to deal with critical management issues within DOD.** You should examine consolidation opportunities in areas such as health care and intelligence and should pursue both another BRAC round and the transformation of the defense industrial base.
- Finally, in setting priorities, **you should regard getting the right people through the confirmation process and into their jobs as one of your most important tasks.** The competence of the civilian mid-level Defense Department leadership will be crucial to your success.

Additional details on each of these topics will be included in our complete conference report to be issued shortly. We hope both this summary and our broader report will be useful to those now assuming responsibility for the stewardship of our national security.

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